

**AVON TOWN COUNCIL  
MEETING MINUTES  
MARCH 1, 2007**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Chairman Carlson in the Selectmen's Chamber. Members in attendance: Mrs. Hornaday, Messrs Shea and Zacchio. Absent: Mr. Woodford

**II. PUBLIC HEARINGS- None**

**III. MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETING:**

On a motion made by Mr. Shea, seconded by Mr. Zacchio, it was voted:

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council approve the minutes of the January 29, 2007 Special Meeting as read.

Messrs Carlson, Shea and Zacchio voted in favor. Mrs. Hornaday abstained because she was absent.

On a motion made by Mr. Shea, seconded by Mr. Zacchio, it was voted:

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council approve the minutes of the February 1, 2007 meeting as amended.

Mrs. Hornaday, Messrs Carlson, Shea and Zacchio voted in favor.

On a motion made by Mr. Shea, seconded by Mrs. Hornaday, it was voted:

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council approve the minutes of the February 10, 2007 Special Budget Meeting as read.

Mrs. Hornaday, Messrs Carlson, Shea and Zacchio voted in favor.

**IV. COMMUNICATION FROM AUDIENCE**

Trish Rioux, Secret Lake Representative, reported we had a meeting on February 24<sup>th</sup> and the installation of public water was voted down. One of the driving factors was cost. Second factor is there is a group of homeowners that believe their wells are the one item that they do not have to pay for. Another factor that did upset the homeowners is that we included the Canton residents, which was based on our Charter and discussions between our attorney and the Town Attorney. Canton residents were allowed to come to the meeting but we asked that they abstain from voting because the cost of this project would impact only on Avon residents. She also reported what we will do now is to see where the road drainage curbing improvement project is and we understand the first portion of that will not be allocated until 08/09 and we will be looking at two – three years for that project to start. We will be working closely with the town on road repairs during that period of time. She also thanked the Town Engineer, Town Manager, the Assistant to the Town Manager and the Fire Marshall, who participated in trading information at our meeting. Chairman Carlson reported it is in the plans for 08/09 unless something more pressing comes up and we will re-evaluate that as we do with all the capital projects.

Mrs. Stahl–Sunset Trail reported we want to thank the Town Council for their work and also all the work that Trish did, she has done a wonderful job.

A town resident from the Secret Lake reported he wanted to make sure the Town Council was informed that the vote to approve a water system at Secret Lake was defeated. He wanted to voice his opinion on how badly it is needed. Chairman Carlson reported we had received an email with the actual tally of votes, and based on that tally, it was taken off our agenda for any further discussion.

Tim Cronin-Pine Trail reported he received a letter from the Police Association, asking for donations. He questioned if this is a legitimate group. Do the police not have enough money to do what they want to do? Chairman Carlson reported this is a legitimate group and the Town Council members are regular donors.

The Town Manager reported the Avon Police Association was formed shortly after Avon started a full time Police Department in the late 1940's. It is more of a fraternal organization among the police officers in Avon. They raise money for their own purposes, like providing extra equipment or bullet proof vests for the Police Department that is not budgeted by the town. A significant part of the fundraising goes back to the officers in the form of equipment or clothing. They also retain a portion of it for their own purposes to help officers that have family issues that are not covered by insurance. They also have social activities, they also facilitate and work with children in the community, so the money goes for good causes, but it is not a town organization. It is an independent, non-profit organization, which has a president and a board of directors, made up of current and past members of the Avon Police Department.

Mr. Edward Saillant – Goodwill Trail stated he wanted to thank the Avon Police Department, who was very quick to respond to his wife's 911 call. They did a wonderful job.

## **V. COMMUNICATION FROM COUNCIL**

Mrs. Hornaday reported she went to the grand opening of Citibank and it is a pleasure and an honor to represent the Town Council. She reported the bank made a very nice donation to the education group that is here tonight and that was a big feature of the evening. She also stated the bank offers some educational programs for the community. They do a lot of things to help people with retirement planning and ways of protecting your credit card information and they also have educational programs for the school. The Superintendent of Schools was also there and got the information also.

## **VI. OLD BUSINESS**

### **00/01-07 Status Report and Reappropriation: \$50,000 Building 5 & 6 Supplemental Appropriation (Change of Account Number)**

The Town Manager reported we are basically segregating the funds from the Building 7 project, which is complete. The Assistant to the Town Manager, reported the plan was to fund a portion of this project with funds left over from the Building 7 project. The plans that were funded with the \$50,000 have been completed and the estimate has been received. The base amount of construction and soft costs is \$2,238,000 to which I would recommend adding some of the alternates that we requested. In order to make it a complete project, the cost goes up to \$2,353,513. She also reported the major cost driver is, the buildings were made into office space in the mid 1960's and the building codes have changed since then. We need to make it more energy efficient. We have no insulation or sprinkler systems and the windows need to be replaced. If this project is approved at referendum, it can be started in June of this year and will go on for 8 to 10 months. The price includes moving all the staff who are currently in those buildings, into existing space, like the Avon Room and Selectmen's Chambers, during the construction period. She reported a construction office trailer could also be used right on site for some of the staff. The cost does include the two links between buildings 5 and 6, and 6 and 7. The link between buildings 6 and 7 is critical because an elevator was planned for building 7, but funds were not available at that time.

Mr. Shea questioned, with a 2.4 million-dollar project, what is the budget level that we must work around. The Town Manager reported it is essentially 1 mill, which would be \$2,126,000, so we are over our limit. We need some indication tonight because of the schedule, as to whether you want to move ahead with the project, because we will need to put together a town wide mailing with the facts. We will also have to go to the Board of Finance and tentatively schedule a joint meeting in April for approvals and then set a town meeting date, so if you have problems with the project, now is the time to discuss it. Mr. Shea stated while we are displaced for meetings, we should discuss having meetings at different locations, like the library, the schools and public works. It will give the Town Council an opportunity to get into these buildings to have their meetings and also a chance for the public to view these buildings.

The Assistant to the Town Manager reported the prices were received from sub-contractors and are probably not the best yet. Until there is a contract going forward, they will not give us the final price, so

we hope to save a couple percentage points on that. We might also save some money on energy conservation with Connecticut Light & Power.

Chairman Carlson questioned if there are any Historic grants out there, since these are historical buildings, that we can utilize. The Assistant to the Town Manager stated she would look into that. She also reported one of the other concerns the Town Council had was the roofs of certain buildings, which you have brought up on several occasions. Our plan is not to replace them, but to re-coat them with an epoxy type finish that Ensign Bickford has had success with in the rest of the park.

Mr. Shea reported every time as we go forward, we discuss this project with the community. The school system had some building needs and I think that this project in its size, at this point, might sneak up on some people and I think we need to let the community know just how long we have waited on this. We have been talking about this since 1999.

On a motion made by Mrs. Hornaday, seconded by Mr. Zacchio, it was voted:

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council favorably recommends to the Board of Finance a transfer of appropriation not to exceed \$50,000 from the Capital and Nonrecurring Expenditure Fund, Town Hall Renovations, Building 7 Account #03-4930-53358, segregating the Building 5/6 Appropriation and Expenditures from those of the Building 7 project

**TO**

Capital and Nonrecurring Expenditures, Town Hall Renovations, Building 5 & 6 Projects Fund, Account # 03-4930-53386, for the purpose of segregating the Building 5 & 6 Appropriation and Expenditures from those of the Building 7 project.

Mrs. Hornaday, Messrs Carlson, Shea and Zacchio voted in favor.

**05/06-54 Codification of Ordinances: Adopt Regulations: Dwight Johnson**

Chairman Carlson reported we had a Public Hearing and invited public comment at the last meeting on the Codification of the Ordinances. Mr. Shea commended Murtha Cullina Law firm and Caroline LaMonica for all the effort that went into completing this project, which has been a very long and detailed process.

On a motion made by Mr. Zacchio, seconded by Mrs. Hornaday, it was voted:

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council adopt Municipal Fees and Bond Regulations effective March 2, 2007 as follows:

**MUNICIPAL FEES AND BOND REGULATION**

adopted by resolution of the

Avon Town Council on March 1, 2007

Pursuant to the Avon Code of Ordinances (“Code”), the Town Council hereby establishes by regulation the following fees and bond requirements, to be effective as of March 2, 2007.

- I. **Building Permit Fees.** Pursuant to Code § 9-23, the following fees are hereby established.
  - (a) Permit fees shall be \$26.00 for the first \$1,000.00 of work or part thereof, and an additional \$13.00 for each additional \$1,000.00 of work or part thereof.
  - (b) If work is started without the required permit, the applicable fee shall be increased by the lesser of \$1,000.00 or 100% of the fee that otherwise would be due.
  - (c) A reinspection fee of \$25.00 shall be imposed for each second or subsequent reinspection.
- II. **Open Burning Permit Fees.** Pursuant to Code § 20-45, the fee for an open burning permit shall be \$25.00.
- III. **Peddlers, Solicitors and Closeout Sales Fees.** Pursuant to Code § 43-6, the following fees are hereby established.
  - (a) The annual fee for a Class A License shall be \$25.00 and shall cover both the nonprofit organization and all of its representatives.
  - (b) The annual fee for a Class B License shall be \$25.00 per person or organization, with a maximum annual fee of \$250.00 for an organization and its representatives.

IV. Highway Excavations, Obstructions and Driveway Fees and Bonds. Pursuant to Code § 53-43, the following fees and bonds are hereby established.

- (a) The fee for issuing each permit under the provisions of Code § 53-43 shall be \$50.00 provided, however, that the fee may be waived in accordance with the provisions of Code § 53-43.
- (b) The amount of the cash or surety bond that must be deposited on issuance of the permit shall be \$5,000.00.

Mrs. Hornaday, Messrs Carlson, Shea and Zacchio voted in favor.

Chairman Carlson reported in recognition of her many years of service to the Town, the Town Council decided to dedicate this volume to Caroline LaMonica. The Town Manager presented Mrs. LaMonica with a copy of the Ordinances, which included a dedication page and her photograph, on behalf of a grateful Town for her caring and professional service to our community during her many years as Town Clerk from 1968 – 2006, on behalf of the Town Council.

**06/07-02 Recommend FY 07/08 Budget to Board of Finance**

Chairman Carlson reported, as a matter of procedure, we must recommended the 07/08 Budget to the Board of Finance.

On a motion made by Mr. Shea, seconded by Mr. Zacchio, it was voted:

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council approve and forward the FY 2007/2008 Proposed Budget of \$65,685,528 to the Board of Finance, as follows:

***REVENUES***

Property Tax & Assessments	\$	58,542,115
State & Federal Grants		2,370,361
Licenses, Fees & Permits		1,205,800
Charges for Current Services		2,438,887
Other Local Revenues		1,128,365
Other Financing Sources (Uses)		0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>65,685,528</b>

***EXPENDITURES***

Town Operating Budget	\$	17,544,258
School Operating Budget		39,576,181
Sewer Operating Budget		1,159,696
Capital & Debt Service Budgets:		
Debt Service	5,194,093	
Capital Budget (CNREF		
Facilities & Equipment)	2,211,300	
Subtotal: Capital & Debt Service		7,405,393
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>65,685,528</b>

Mrs. Hornaday, Messrs Carlson, Shea and Zacchio voted in favor.

The Town Manager reported under the provisions of the Charter, you do have the opportunity to make recommendations to the Board of Finance regarding the Board of Education Budget. It was the consensus of the Town Council to pass the Board of Education budget on without comment.

Mrs. Hornaday reported she noticed that both the Town and the Board of Education have added things into the budget that were not anticipated last year and we really need to be careful about that because the residents never had the chance to see these new items. We need to be careful about adding or increasing items after the budget has been passed.

**06/07-18 Additional Transfer Appropriation: \$24,137 Demolition of Towpath School.**

The Town Manager reported we are requesting an additional transfer of money because of additional costs associated with the project and we did not ask for this money at the original time. He reported they found additional asbestos in the walls and we had not appropriated for asbestos removal cost at the time we did the demolition contract.

The Director of Public Works reported asbestos was found in the walls of both the main and lower levels. The Town Manager reported we do have the money, which can be taken from the Open Space Account.

On a motion made by Mrs. Hornaday, seconded by Mr. Shea, it was voted:

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council favorably recommends to the Board of Finance an appropriation not to exceed \$24,137 from Account #02-0390-43923, Capital Projects Fund (Facil & Equip), Other Financing Sources, Fund Bal. Res. Land Acq./Pres. To Account 02-4848-53052, Capital Projects Fund (Facil & Equip), Town CIP-Facil/Land Acquisition Preservation, Towpath School Demolition Project for the purpose of removing additional unforeseen asbestos, and the oversight monitoring of the asbestos material.

Mrs. Hornaday, Messrs Carlson, Shea and Zacchio voted in favor.

**06/07-47 Approve Roaring Brook School Roof Grant Application:**

- a. Approve and Authorize Avon Board of Education to apply for State Grant
- b. Building Committee (Miller, Franzi and Robinson)
- c. Approve Construction Specifications

The Assistant to the Town Manager reported she was informed by the Board of Education that they have gotten their initial response from the State of Connecticut regarding the application for a grant. This Resolution allows the Superintendent of Schools to apply for the grant. She also reported the Town Council has to authorize the building committee and then we would go forward to approve the schematic design and go out to bid.

Mrs. Hornaday requested that Bruce Williams, Director of Public Works, participate in the group so that we have all our people on buildings and grounds involved with the roofing projects because he needs to be aware of what is happening there, as well as Mr. Miller.

The Town Manager reported that would be fine because Mr. Williams has been involved with these things in the past in terms of the selection of the consultant. He was responsible last year for the Firehouse #1 roof replacement, he has been doing the preliminary work on the public works garage and even the Senior Center.

It was the general consensus of the Town Council to have Mr. Williams, Director of Public Works, appointed to the Building Committee for the Roaring Brook Elementary School re-roofing project.

On a motion made by Mrs. Hornaday, seconded by Mr. Shea, it was voted:

**WHEREAS:** The Avon Board of Education has approved a recommendation to the Town Council for the Superintendent in conjunction with the architectural firm selected by the Town to file the appropriate forms for a grant reimbursement to the State Department of Education for the proposed Roaring Brook Elementary School re-roofing project, and

**WHEREAS:** The Avon Board of Education has approved a recommendation to the Town Council for a building committee for the Roaring Brook Elementary School re-roofing project of four individuals consisting of Gary J. Franzi, Director of Finance, Mr. Michael Miller, Director of Buildings and Grounds, Ms. Blythe Robinson, Assistant to the Town Manager, and Bruce Williams, Director of Public Works, and

**WHEREAS:** The Avon Board of Education has recommended to the Town Council to approve the building committee to authorize the preparation of schematic drawing and outline

specifications for the building project and approve the construction documents and specification for the proposed roof replacement at Roaring Brook Elementary School, and

**WHEREAS:** The Avon Board of Education approved the submission of this action of their February 6, 2007 meeting to the Avon Town Council for resolution.

**BE IT RESOLVED:** That the Avon Town Council authorizes establishing a building committee of four for the proposed re-roofing project, approves the building committee to authorize the preparation of schematic drawings and outline specifications, and to approve construction documents and specifications for the proposed re-roofing project, and authorizes the Superintendent to file an application to the State of Connecticut for the re-roofing project.

Mrs. Hornaday, Messrs Carlson, Shea and Zacchio voted in favor.

**VII. NEW BUSINESS**

**06/07-53 Proclamation: 95<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Founding of Girl Scouts**

Stacy Waxton-Hall, manager for the Avon Girl Scouts, and daughter Audrey from Troop #6240, and Joanne Merrill, Troop Leader and daughter Caroline from Troop #6335 were present to accept a proclamation presented by the Avon Town Council in celebration of the 95<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Founding of Girl Scouts.

**“PROCLAMATION”**

**WHEREAS,** Monday, March 12, 2007, marks the 95<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of GIRL SCOUTS of the USA, founded by Juliette Gordon Low in 1912 in Savannah, Georgia; and,

**WHEREAS,** throughout its distinguished history, Girl Scouting has helped build millions of girls and women of courage, confidence and character; and

**WHEREAS,** through the dedication, time, and talent of volunteers of different backgrounds, abilities, and areas of expertise, the GIRL SCOUT organization thrives for girls in so many settings.

**WHEREAS,** through Girl Scouting’s unique leadership development program, girls define leadership by making the world a better place by discovering, connecting, and taking action in their communities; and,

**WHEREAS,** Girl Scouting takes an active role in increasing girls’ awareness of the opportunities available to them today in math, science, sports, technology, health and fields that can expand their horizons; and,

**WHEREAS,** more than 3.7 million GIRL SCOUT members nationwide will be celebrating 95 years of this American tradition, with nearly 50 million women who grew up participating in Girl Scouting and exemplify the impact of this amazing Movement;

**NOW, THEREFORE,** We, the Town Council of the Town of Avon, do hereby applaud the commitment GIRL SCOUTS has made to America’s girls and proudly proclaim the week of March 11 – 17, 2007 as Girl Scouts Make the World a Better Place Week.

Mrs. Hornaday reported she was a Girl Scout as a child and continued through her high school years, and even today, still have reunions with the friends I made in scouting. She also stated scouting was one of the most rewarding activities of my life.

**06/07-54 Avon Education Foundation: Request for Permission for Avon High School Pavers Fundraiser: Ginny McGee**

Ms. McGee reported the Avon Education Foundation is requesting approval from the Town Council to have a fundraising project to be done in conjunction with the renovation of the Avon High School. She reported this foundation was formed to raise money for educational programs within the Town of Avon, not just for the public schools, but for the town in general. They have raised over \$100,000 so far and have given over \$40,000 to the schools and the library. They are an all-volunteer board. The description of this project is to sell brick pavers with inscriptions to the public and the pavers would be placed in the walkway of the back entrance of the high school. We are planning on having two different sized bricks, 4 x 8 and 8 x 8. We do not have prices set yet but are thinking \$100 range for the small brick and \$225 for the large brick. We have gone before the Board of Education with this project, they approved it and Dr.

Kisiel is on our board so everything that has been discussed has gone through him, but we have not made any commitments to go forward with this project until we get permission from the Town Council. We have the potential of raising \$200,000 at which time the school can come to us with information on what they need. She also stated this project will probably be the last step of the renovations. The only requirement for use of these funds is that they be used on innovative and creative projects, not projects that were cut from the budget. These funds are not meant to supplement the budget. They are only for new and outstanding projects that never would be part of the budget.

Chairman Carlson reported the Town always guards itself from accepting a gift, which actually creates an obligation for the Town, for instance, maintenance. He questioned what is in your bylaws in the way of gifting that would preclude you from doing what was just described. Ms. McGee reported that the Board of Education and the Town have to accept the gift and approve any expenditures. We can not go out, buy it and say, here—It has to be approved by the Town Council and the Board of Education. She also reported we will have money set aside for the maintenance of the bricks, so if they should crack or break in the future, they can be replaced.

Mrs. Hornaday stated several years ago the Avon Garden Club had brick pavers installed around the gazebo, and they still may have that information. We can get that for you, if you think it would be helpful in the way of time and effort. Mrs. Doucette was in charge of that. Mr. Zacchio reported the Italian Club had that type of work done in the fall of 2006 and may also have information for you. Mr. Shea stated the Avon Education Foundation is an outstanding organization that does fine work, but most importantly it is another example of an independent group that makes Avon special and works within the community to help the town to do things that we normally would not be able to do. We need to enthusiastically support groups like this and projects like this, so we continue to have that kind of spirit out there.

On a motion made by Mr. Shea, seconded by Mr. Zacchio, it was voted:

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council approve the request of the Avon Education Foundation to have an Avon High School Pavers Fundraiser.

Mrs. Hornaday, Messrs Carlson, Shea and Zacchio voted in favor.

**06/07-55 Supplemental Appropriation: \$25,000 Board of Education State Grants (Technology)**

On a motion made by Mr. Shea, seconded by Mr. Zacchio, it was voted:

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council hereby recommends that the Board of Finance amend the FY 60/07 Budget by increasing:

**REVENUES**

State and Federal Education Grants Fund, Intergovernmental, Ed. Tech. Infrastructure Grant, Account #13-0330-43375 in the amount of \$25,000 and increasing

**APPROPRIATIONS**

State and Federal Education Grants, Board of Education, State Grants, Account # 13-9401-59200, in the amount of \$25,000 for the purpose of recording the State Funds for Tech. Infrastructure Grant to be used for installation of routers at all the schools.

Mrs. Hornaday, Messrs Carlson, Shea and Zacchio voted in favor.

**06/07-56 Approve: Letter of Support for Public Safety Academy**

Police Chief Rinaldo reported the Public Safety Academy proposed a middle/high school and community college facility that will offer students an academic curriculum and advanced training in public safety. This will be done in the regular school year along with a six-week summer program. It will be based on national standards established for fire, police, EMS and Homeland Security training. It is the first of it's kind and is what we need to attract young people into the public safety employment sector and he fully supports it.

Chairman Carlson reported the Chief of Police has requested a letter of support be given by the Town Council for a proposed Public Safety Academy. Mr. Zacchio reported this is a fantastic great idea because we have enough trouble recruiting people into our Police Department as it is. It would be great to have an academy where kids can learn public safety all along. Mrs. Hornaday reported it is good because we do not live in a community where we have foot patrol, it gives the young people an opportunity to meet some of our officers and develop a relationship with them, which is a positive thing.

On a motion made by Mr. Zacchio, seconded by Mr. Shea, it was voted:

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council submit a letter of support for a Public Safety Academy to Dr. Joe Townsley, General Director of Magnet Schools, Capitol Region Education Council.

Mrs. Hornaday, Messrs Carlson, Shea and Zacchio voted in favor.

### **VIII. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT/MISCELLANEOUS**

The Town Manager reported we have Budget Work Sessions with the Board of Finance. The Public Hearing is April 9<sup>th</sup>, at 7:30 pm at the Senior Center. The Budget Work Session will be downstairs in the Avon Room the following night, April 10<sup>th</sup>, at 7:00 pm. One other meeting has been scheduled for Wednesday, April 11<sup>th</sup>, at 7 pm, in the Avon Room as well. On April 11<sup>th</sup>, the Board of Finance will be making their adjustments to the budget and we may have to have a special meeting ourselves to decide what we want to do.

The Board of Finance met this past Monday, we had the audit report for the FY 05/06. There were no material weaknesses. They also appointed the Auditor for the FY 06/07. We went over the audit report in general and a management letter in particular. A comment was made raised regarding a management letter from a year ago, on the 04/05 audit, which had talked about the prepaid Federal and State Education Grant. The auditors were concerned that there were significant year after year supplemental appropriations for grants and have recommended that they be included in the budget process. We did a five-year analysis of the supplemental appropriations and the high was about \$800,000 to \$900,000 and the low was about \$200,000 but the average was about \$400,000. The Board of Finance decided they wanted to have a more in-depth discussion of how and whether we should include that in the Board of Education's budget, and how it would be presented at the town meeting, since it would inflate the Board of Education's budget. It would not have any impact on the tax rate because the revenues are going to offset any expenditure, but it would have an impact on the percentage increase in the Board of Education's budget. The Board of Finance spent some time last summer and early fall discussing this and had us do an historical five-year look, which we had to come up with a couple of modified presentations as to how it might be displayed so that we could explain it easier to the public as to why the Board of Education budget might be increasing that much. It was decided Monday night to hold a special meeting on March 16<sup>th</sup> with the Chairman of the Board of Education, Superintendent of Schools, Finance Director from the Board of Education, the Auditor, myself, our Finance Director, Tom Harrison and the Board of Finance members that want to attend. There will be discussions held as to whether those grant funds will be added or not.

He reported we have received the November 2006 Municipal Fiscal Indicator's Report from the State of Connecticut. One specifically notable achievement is the tax collection. The City of Torrington is first, but they contract out tax collections, which means they collect 100% of their revenues but do not receive any interest on their money. Avon is second on the list, and has the highest percentage of tax collections in the State of Connecticut for the FY 04/05. We have taken the liberty of writing a letter to Kay Roth, the Tax Collector, commending her performance for doing that. Collections are running about the same- we are getting more money in but less of the bills are being paid compared to last year—because the levy is up, the collection is up but the number of delinquencies is up slightly also. We are monitoring this closely because of what is developing in the housing market.



He reported the Director of Social Services is requesting an increase of \$1,500 in the budget for Interval House West. We currently pay them \$1,000 per year for Interval House, which is for woman, children and families suffering from abuse issues. We use them on an information referral basis. Their grant funding has ended, so they have been looking for the area towns to fund them. The increase in our budget would have gone from \$1,000 to \$14,000 and looking at the statistics and after talking to Allen Rosenberg, we had a presentation at the Farmington Valley Collaborative in East Granby, most of the towns in the valley are not supporting that request. The Director of Social Services did recommend an increase of \$1,500 which was not in the budget last month, so I will probably be making a recommendation in April to approve this increase. We do find it a valuable resource, where on occasion, we transport through the Police Department individuals to the location.

He reported the auction of surplus equipment is almost completed, we are still waiting for the checks and the people to come in but it was over \$15,000 so we will be asking for a supplemental appropriation to put that into the Equipment Reserve Account at the appropriate time. Chairman Carlson questioned if the Town Manager had to opportunity to share with the Fleet Manager, Mr. Trujillo how, pleased the Town Council was when he reported this idea and the implementation of it? The Town Manager reported absolutely. He further reported the Fleet Manager has done a number of things in policies and procedures and, having been the manager of the Hartford fleet operation, has experience in things like this.

The Town Manager reported we hope to have a presentation at the April meeting on the Recreation Master Plan. The Parks and Recreation Committee has been working on that and has prioritized things in terms of what we can do the quickest with the least amount of money, to facilitate some projects.

The Assistant to the Town Manager reported a spreadsheet has been assembled, with a list of all contracts the town has entered into over the years. This was done to determine what goods and services need to be acquired in accordance with the Town's purchasing policy. In the one's we have done so far, one of particular importance is Brush Collection that we managed to find two more interested bidders and the low bid came in \$1,000 below what we budgeted and significantly less than the bids a month ago. This low bidder is a small company from Massachusetts, who will have 3 crews in town and understands how the Director of Public Works wants the work done. Mr. Shea questioned if this company is bonded and requested that Ms. Robinson find out who his bonding company is, as it may be different from his insurance company.

She also reported the Municipal Refuse Disposal, which is done jointly with the schools, has also been successful so far. We have a new vendor from Plainville, which will be saving the Town and the Board of Education about \$10,000. Their references are excellent and they also clearly understand the project and we will be transitioning from Waste Management at the end of June, to this new firm.

Mr. Shea stated at one point in time, we talked about doing something at the Town Green in the way of tree pruning and landscaping and questioned if there is a plan in place. The Town Manager reported there is, but the holdup has been we want to get the wiring diagram done by a certified electrical engineer and ordering the equipment. We have the equipment now, including the replacement box, we are just waiting for spring to install it. Hopefully by Memorial Day it should be completed.

The Town Manager reported we had included a copy of the draft of the updated Master Sewer Facilities Plan. This was a large expense for the Town, almost \$400,000 that was paid from the Sewer Fund. We should be getting a grant from the DEP for \$155,000 of the amount. But we are not sure when we will get that grant because it is tied up with the State's Clean Water Program, and it will depend how much the state decides to bond for that program. We hope we will get it for this coming fiscal year but it can be 08/09 before we receive the money. We are anticipating in May, we will be having a presentation and the Town Engineer will be here along with Fuss & O'Neill and we will show you exactly what we have been able to accomplish with it. They will also recommend where sewers should be installed and in priority

order and some modifications, administratively as to how we are doing things. The Sewer Fund balance is 1.2 million as of last June and we are going to be facing our first payments from Simsbury probably next spring, and those payments will total over 1 million dollars because there are some backup payments and subsequent to that, we will be paying somewhere in the neighbor of 3 to 4 hundred thousand dollars per year to Simsbury as part of our share of their treatment plant expansion and upgrade level treatment. We have also been having discussions with Farmington regarding differences of opinion, over how much we should be paying them. He reported that one of the things that is going to be mentioned in this Master Sewer Facilities Plan is that we need to renegotiate the contracts that we have with Farmington, Simsbury and Canton. We do not have our own treatment plant, we contract with the three towns and they process our sewerage. Those agreements were originally drafted in 1970 and were 30-year agreements, so in the year 2000 they expired. But there is a clause in there that states they will continue on a year to year basis, unless one of the parties decides they do not want to continue. We are interested in getting them back into a longer-term agreement, which is more certain. We are also in discussions with Farmington as to interpretation of some of the clauses in that 1970 agreement in terms as to how much we should pay. We are currently waiting for legal opinions from both attorneys. We say we only pay them on a per gallon basis for the flow that goes into Farmington and we have a flow meter at the town line that gives us readings as to how much flow is going into Farmington. Farmington is saying that Avon needs to pay a prorated share of the system, which includes their lines that go to Burlington, the lines over by Tunxis College, and all of the Farmington system that we are supposed to pay a portion of. The difference is about \$200,000 per year. One of the goals and objections for the next year or two is to get these contracts updated and renewed with all three communities.

Mr. Shea questioned is the point of discussion, Avon Town Manager with the Farmington Town Manager, or is it our Engineering Department with their Engineering Department? The Town Manager reported both he and the Town Manager of Farmington were present at the meeting, we were basically observers, and listening more to what is going on between the two engineering staffs. The one who was most aggressive concerning this is their plant manager. The general consensus was to get an interpretation from the lawyers, to clear the air, as to what is in the contract. The Town Manager reported we had some similar issues with Simsbury several years ago and we were able to work those out.

The Assistant to the Town Manager reported there are a few important things to update you on the High School, one is the new traffic light that would go in at the entrance to the high school, and the status of the road on West Avon Road. The Department of Transportation invited FIP to come to the coordination meeting, and the State is planning to resurface Route 167 this summer. As part of that project, they have offered to do some widening in front of the high school. It will not include any utility relocations but can widen it by about 8 feet, which will allow them to put in left turn lane into the school if you are heading south, and a right turn lane if you are heading north, in anticipation of that light in 2008. They have required the new driveway curb cut that we need, to be slightly changed so that there will only be a right turn in and out, so you will not be able to take a left to go in if you are going south. We will probably have to pay the contractor for the changes to make that happen with installing an island and slightly moving a catch basin, but that is minor in the way of dollars.

Chairman Carlson questioned what will that do to the traffic flow? Ms. Robinson reported the State has decided, in order to will give us that second entrance, they do not want to allow left turn in, so parents going in to pick up their children, will have to use the other driveway, or come north and turn in, and then leave, going north. Mrs. Hornaday questioned where the second driveway would enter the school. Ms. Robinson stated it would be at the fire station. That is the only way the State will approve the second curb cut. Chairman Carlson stated it was our understanding that the new entrance was going to be for parent drop off, which will create a problem for parents coming from the north because they will not be allowed to make a left turn from Route 167 into the new driveway. The Town Manager reported they may have parents enter the school by the main driveway and exit by way of the new driveway. If you want to take a left, you will have to go back out the main entrance.

Mr. Shea stated we better make sure this is the best route to take before we have it done and find out later that it was not a good move. Chairman Carlson reported he would like to hear back from the Committee on the traffic pattern and the validity of actually doing the driveway. Mr. Shea reported this has to be looked at more closely before any decisions are made. Ms. Robinson reported she also wants to talk with Kaestle & Boos for their opinion on the traffic issue. Chairman Carlson reported he would like to hear back from the Building Committee as to the traffic flow impact as a result of doing the driveway. Mrs. Hornaday stated that the majority of people dropping off their children are coming from the north, which would require them to make a left turn into the driveway, so to eliminate that turn could cause a real problem. There is still a question of should that road be put in, if we can only use it on a limited basis.

An Avon resident stated there are two big problems at the high school. One, we have too many kids driving to school. We pay a lot for school busses and they should be required to ride on them. Secondly, I do not think parents should be driving their kids all the way around that school. If you are going to let them drive, it would be better to have a small area to drop kids off on the Route 167 side of the foot ball field and let them walk from there, up to the school. Chairman Carlson reported the whole purpose of this drive was to segregate the parental drop off of students. Teenage driving is not the issue because they restrict the number of parking permits at the High School. It is only those that have jobs and a certain number of seniors have parking permits. The biggest issue is the parental drop off and as much as we would like kids to ride the school busses, we can not legislate that. Therefore our compromised position was to come up with this driveway idea, which we are I am now questioning the usage of that, given the fact that the State is putting restrictions on it. If we can figure out a way, even if it costs some money, to make this more viable, it would be great. Mr. Carlson also questioned what the State is doing as far as the traffic study at the intersection of Country Club Road and West Avon Road, since there have been numerous accidents there. The Town Manager reported the whole intersection has to be upgraded with turning lanes. We submitted a request to the State Traffic Commission about two and one-half years ago and it is my understanding that it is for engineering for the intersection, which will be done within the next six months. We can anticipate, within the next couple of years there will be an upgrade of that whole intersection. It will mean obviously, land taking on all four sides and turning lanes and a traffic signal with arrows for turning. Mr. Zacchio questioned why are we spending money on repaving, only to tear it up in a couple of years. That road is in good shape. The Town Manager reported Route 167 is a state road and they are the one's that manage it and we have brought this to their attention several times.

The Assistant to the Town Manager reported we are planning on doing the sidewalk after the widening of the road. As far as the high school, we have had to approve a change order to change the price of the project. We had several storm drain lines that never were put on any drawings, which have resulted in change orders of \$37,600 dollars. They were from roof drains so they had to redesign and relocate those drains.

Mrs. Hornaday reported we received a copy of the letter that was written by the President of the CCM regarding the education plan of the Governor and questioned if the position of the CCM could be explained. The Town Manager reported CCM (Connecticut Conference of Municipalities) is supportive of additional aid for education, but they have some issues with some of the other proposals of the Governor to cut the non-education funding. The Governor's report and also the CCM report are both positive in terms of more funding for education, but there are significant increase in the CCM report, in terms of the amount of money they feel is necessary to equalize the education effort in the state as opposed to Governor's commitment recommendation. The issue that is being debated is obviously, how to raise the money. The Governor has proposed a flat increase in the income tax. The Democrat's think they may want to move that into a millionaire's tax, with the tax starting at about 250 thousand dollars and going up on a progressive basis, to raise the same amount of revenue. He reported the First Selectmen from Ridgefield, which has similar demographic characteristics in terms of income, indicated that Ridgefield would be contributing about 18 million dollars more in income tax proceeds to the State of

Connecticut, and they would be getting back only 2 million dollars, in terms of additional State Aide. So there would be a net outflow from Ridgefield residents of about 16 million dollars. We have asked our legislative delegation to see if we could get figures from the Office of Fiscal Analysis or in OPM to see what Avon's change would be, in terms of the income tax.

Mrs. Hornaday reported her concern for towns like Avon because she does not trust that the money will keep coming, based on our past experiences. She is concerned about the income tax, but more importantly, has been hearing about the possibility of the State moving in on the property tax and taking other revenue sources that the communities have, but has heard very little about what is coming out through the Labor Commission, which will be a huge expenditure for the local communities. At some point when we are talking about our budget, it would be good to have some conversation about the long term impact of some of the things they are talking about at the State House, that will have a major impact on our town, in terms of the revenues we have and our ability to generate revenue to pay for the services that we want. She also stated the labor issue could also deplete any increase in the revenues from education. Long term, it could have a negative impact on this town.

The Town Manager reported it is still early, there are a number of revenue sources we are keeping an eye on, like the Conveyance Tax. There is only discussion on how to raise the revenue to pay for educational things. We will get only 400,000 to 500,000 dollars out of this, which is primarily through the Conveyance Tax. We lose town aide road money, we lose the Pequot money, not all of it but they have reduced these grants, the telecommunications pact is one. There is a 60 million-dollar statewide reduction in non-education grants. He reported many of the municipal communities in the past, have included the Governor's revenue estimates in their budgets, and generally that has been safe because they have been relatively incremental and small, with no major change. This year, because of the Governor's budget, there are major changes in what she is proposing. About half the communities are including the Governor's revenue figures in their budgets, the other half are only including part or none at all. At this point, we are not including any.

He reported he had a discussion with the Board of Finance on Monday night regarding all these things, so we are being very conservative and are not budgeting any of these things, including the Conveyance Tax, the increases in the ECF or any other education grant increases. We are keeping those revenues the same, with the idea that maybe by April 9th, 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup>, we will have a better idea as to whether we can include some of those revenues in the budget or not. Some communities are budgeting the Governor's figures but are hedging it with capital projects. That way, if they do not get the money, the capital projects do not get funded. The other way to do it is to not include these projects, reduce the budget, and if we get the money then we can fund the project. That is what we did with buying those two houses adjacent to the library, we waited until we knew we were definitely going to have the money. He reported there are so many real and perceived unmet needs by a wide variety of interest groups that are all lobbying at the Capital. They see that revenue stream of 1.5 billion dollars, which the Governor says will go for education. DCF wants part of that and everyone is angling to get a piece of that revenue stream. So, it may start out here as education but it may be split into things like prisons, child and family services, Medicaid and everyone else gets a chunk of it as it goes along. There is almost universal opinion, with the people that we have been talking with, either in the legislature or other towns, that the car tax thing is not going anywhere. Everyone is focused on education and the income tax and how that is going to work. Even if everything goes as planned; we are still only going to get \$500,000.

#### **IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION: Litigation/Negotiation**

On a motion made by Mr. Shea, seconded by Mr. Zacchio, it was voted:

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council go into Executive Session at 9:20 p.m.

Mrs. Hornaday, Messrs Carlson, Shea and Zacchio voted in favor.

Those in Attendance: Town Manager, Assistant to the Town Manager and the Town Council Clerk.

On a motion made by Mr. Shea, seconded by Mr. Zacchio, it was voted:

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council come out of Executive Session at 9:40 p.m.  
Mrs. Hornaday, Messrs Carlson, Shea and Zacchio voted in favor.

**X. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

**ATTEST:**

**Caroline B. LaMonica**  
Clerk